6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

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423 Sub-divisions in Láhaul. Nature of townships and villages.

though it has a name of its own, and the houses stand together almost wall to wall, yet it sometimes happens that some of these houses, with the fields attached to them, are reckoned to belong to another village, or to another *kothí* even. The real elementary parts are the household allotments, which, for want of another name, may be called *jeolas*, as in Kúlu. A village or group of houses is known to contain a certain number of these estates, each of which has a name of its own, which is applied indiscriminately to either the house or the land. It is the custom also, as in the case of Scotch lairds, for friends and neighbours to address the head of the family by this same territorial name. The fields forming an allotment are generally all in the *chauks* or blocks of arable land round the village, but some of them are sometimes at a distance in the *chauks* of other villages.

423 Rights in waste lands by custom of country (Láhaul).

From the above description it will be seen that no definite boundaries in the waste between *kothís* or villages can exist; certain natural limits to both are recognized in a loose way, but not so much as limits of properties as in a geographical sense. The waste lands are owned by the ruler of the country or superior landlord, a position which appears to have been formerly occupied by the Rája in a *khálsa kothí*, and the Thákur in a *jágír kothí*. It appears clear that the Thákur must be considered to have been lord of the waste, for his permission was necessary before new fields could be made in it, and such fields paid him rent thenceforth; he could also grant sheep-runs in the high wastes to foreign shepherds and take grazing dues from them; so, again, the estate or *jeola* of a landholder dying without near heirs lapsed to him, and was granted by him to a new man on payment of a fee or *nazarána*. All the villagers have rights of use in the waste, but the cattle or flocks of one *kothí* sometimes graze regularly in the lands of another, and the men of one *kothí* sometimes rely for fuel and timber on the trees growing in another. Within the *kothís* also the different villages use the grass and wood indiscriminately; where the villages are far apart, they keep in practice to separate grounds; where close, they mingle: it is all a matter of custom. There is no other rule by which a dispute can be decided.

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173 423 Original form of holdings of fields (Láhaul).

The allotments of fields or *jeolas* are supposed to have been made authoritatively at some remote period, and to have originally been all equal, and subject to the same amount of rent or taxes, and all liable to furnish one man for service or forced labour when summoned by the lord of the country. They also appear to have been indivisible. In fact, in Gárá and Rangloi, where the Tibetan element predominates in the population, they are still almost all undivided; in Pattan, where the Hindú element predominates, a great deal of sub-division has taken place. After the first allotment was made, other fields were sometimes reclaimed from the waste; these were sometimes formed into a separate allotment, and rated at a full *jeola* or a half or a quarter according to value; or if they were reclaimed by one of the original holders, his holding was thereafter rated at 2 *jeolas* or 1½ or 1¼. A household owning two *jeolas*, had to pay double taxes and take a double share of service; if it held a half only, it was rated in strict proportion. After a time when not much

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Original form of holdings of fields (Láhaul).

room for further extension of cultivation was left,* the assessment or rating on each house or *jeola* became fixed hard and fast; no one in authority took the trouble to revise it, though of course, as time went on, the proportions of the holdings did not remain exactly the same. Some fields were increased by gradual encroachment on the waste, and a few others changed hands. Sale of land was unknown, or the changes would have been greater.

The only known instances where land has been sold are the fields on which the Moravian Mission house is established. Mr. Lyall writes:—

"There is a custom of leasing fields for one or two harvests for a sum in cash down, which in the language of the country is described as a sale, and this peculiarity of idiom at last Settlement led to the belief that a custom of sale prevailed in Láhaul, though not in any other part of the district. Usufructuary mortgages are not uncommon. I did not come across any instance of a *chákri* or *káng chumpá* having mortgaged his holding; but the general opinion of the Thákurs and others whom I consulted was that he could not be prevented from so doing, provided that the mortgagee must pay full rent unless he or the mortgagor performed the customary service."

In Láhaul there are in all 1,085 *jeolas* or holdings, the areas of which vary with the status of the holder. The average area is, for a Bráhman, three acres, for a Thákur or Dotoen eight acres, for a Kanet or Tibetan 4½ acres, for Dágis and other low castes 1½ acres.

Rights of the Thákurs and subordinate landholders of all kinds in *jágír kothís* in Láhaul.

The *jágír kothís* in Láhaul are three in number—Kolong (or Todpa) held by Thákur Hari Chand; Ghumrang, held by Moti Ram; and Ghondla, held by Hira Chand. Of this last-named *kothí* a half was described in former Settlement papers as resumed; one of the last Rájas of Kúlu did in fact resume half, but practically the whole remained undividedly in possession of the Thákur, who accounted to the Rája for half his collections of all kinds. After Regular Settlement he continued in the same way to exact the old dues and services from all the landholders, and to pay the Government the land-revenue for half the *kothí*, plus *nasarána* on account of the other half. The whole of his payments may be considered to have been of the nature of *nasarána*. The nature of the holdings of arable lands in the *jágír kothís* is as follows:—The whole produce of certain fields is taken by the Thákur; this land is cultivated by farm servants, assisted on certain occasions by gatherings of the regular landholders; it is known as the Thákur's *garhpán* or home farm, and, as a general rule, the greater part of it is situated in villages near which he lives. Other fields are held rent-free as maintenance by his *dotoen*, *i.e.*, by the *dunnewasals*, or junior branches of his family or rent-free in lieu of continuous service by his *chákris* or family retainers, or by his *káng chumpá* or farm servants.

The great bulk of the fields, however, form the *jeolas* or holdings of the *yulfa* or villagers, which are held subject to payments of *tal*, *i.e.*, rent or revenue, the performance when required of *begár*

* There is of course any amount of waste land in Láhaul, but no cultivation is possible without irrigation; and the land so situated that it can be irrigated by existing channels, or channels easily to be made, has long been fully occupied in the lower and less inclement parts of the country.

6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

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Rights of the Thakurs and subordinate landholders of all kinds in *jágír kothís* in Láhaul.

or forced labour for the State, and of certain periodical services to the Thákur; an average *jeola* contains about 15 *lákh*, or 5 acres. A *dotoen's* holding is on an average equal in extent to from one to two *jeolas*; a *cháksi's* holding varies between a half and a whole *jeolá*, a *káng chumpá* generally holds only about a quarter *jeola* or less. There are some other small miscellaneous rent-free holdings, the revenue of which must be considered to have been remitted, not in lieu of service to the Thákur, but for the good of the whole community. For example, a few fields known as *garzing* are generally held rent-free by a family of blacksmiths or *lohárs* not so much in lieu of service, for they are paid for their work separately, as to help them to a livelihood, and induce them to settle down. In the same way the *hensís* or musicians hold a little land rent-free under the name of *bezing*; the *jodsis* or astrologers under the name of *onpozing*, and the *béds* or physicians under the name of *manzing*. Astrologers and physicians are, however, men of the regular landholding class, who have also separate *jeolas* or holdings of revenue-paying land. The *lohárs* and *hensís* are low class people, who hold no land, except a few fields given them rent-free. The *garhpán* land, no doubt, belongs solely to the Thákur, who is also landlord or superior prorpietor of the whole *kothí*. "The *yulfa* or villagers," writes Mr. Lyall, "I hold to to be subordinate proprietors of their holdings; so are the *dotoens*. At first was I inclined to think that the *cháksis* and *káng chumpás* were mere tenants in the *garhpán* or private lands of the Thákurs, but on further enquiry their title did not seem to be essentially weaker than that of any other class. They are never evicted, and the custom with regard to inheritance and power of mortgage, with regard to their holdings, and those of the regular landholders, appears to be precisely the same. I consider them therefore to be also subordinate proprietors of their holdings, differing only from the *yulfas* inasmuch as they pay no rent, and do private service only to the Thákur; whereas the latter pay rent and do public service for the State (*begár*), as well as occasional private service to the Thákur. I do not think that the *lohárs*, the *jodhsis* or the *béds*, could now be evicted from the fields they hold rent-free under name of smiths, astrologers, and physicians' land. Probably they could have been evicted by a vote of the community or order of the Thákur in former times, but the general idea now seems to be that they could hardly be evicted, however inefficient. The *hensís*, however, seem to be considered to hold at the pleasure of the Thákur." In some places a field or two are found held rent-free by a *gonpa* or Buddhist monastery, and cultivated not by any one family, but by the neighbouring landholders in unison. This land is considered to be the property of the monastery. So also patches of land under the name of *lházing* or god land, cultivated by the man who acts for the time being as *pujári* or priest of some petty local divinity, are considered the property of the shrine, if there is any, and not of the cultivator, who only holds till he vacates the office of priest, which is not hereditary. *Yurzing* is the term applied to small fields found in many villages, the grain of which is devoted to a feast held by the men who repair a canal. It should be considered the common property of all shareholders in the canal. There are

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The Thákur takes the *chatrú* or colts from landholders of every class: the custom is that when a mare foals, and her master sees that he is not the lucky owner of a filly, he at once takes both mare and colt to the Thákur's house; there he is presented with a new cap as a mark of favour, and leaves his mare to be kept for six months at the Thákurs expense. The nature of the holdings, and of the rents and services paid to the Thákurs, are the same in all the *jágírs*; there are differences of detail, but they do not require to be mentioned.

Land held by the Gúrú Ghantál monastery.

The big monastery of Gúrú Ghantál, with its chapels of ease at Koksar and Sansa, holds a good deal of land in different *kothís* rent-free as endowment. More than half is held of the *gonpa* by *káng chumpá* tenants, who by way of rent only present annually some shoulders of mutton, pots of whisky, and plaited sandals; but are bound to perform certain fixed services, such as the cultivation of the rest of the monastery land, the sweeping of snow off the roof of the monastery in winter, the bringing in so many faggots for winter fuel, &c.

Rights retained by the quondam Thákur of Birbogi.

There is a family in Birbogí which at one time were Thákurs of the *kothí*, and are not yet entirely out of possession. The present head is named Tángan Choigyál, an old man of eighty; his son is *lambardár* of the *kothí*; their manor house (now in ruins) is a very conspicuous object in the landscape, as most of these Thákurs' houses are. The family was in full possession till about the beginning of this century, when Rája Bikrámá Singh of Kúlu picked a quarrel with the then Thákur, and resumed the cash, cloth, and colts out of the items of revenue, leaving him only the grain item as a means of subsistence. This arrangement remained in force, though there is nothing to show that any Sikh or British official was aware of it, till about ten years ago, when grain having risen in price, the landholders, by agreement with the head of the family, converted the grain dues into cash, which has since been paid by each *jeola* in the proportions in which the grain used to be paid.* Each, moreover, continues to furnish a man for the two great *bestis*, that is, for sowing the barley and cutting the hay on the fields owned by the quondam Thákur. These fields were also in great part excused from bearing their share of the revenue of the *kothí* by the other landholders when they distributed it at Regular Settlement. This is all that remains to the present head of the family of its former privileges. He seems to be entitled to a position not unlike that of a *talúkdár* of a village in the plains.

Rights in water in Láhaul.

The small canals upon which cultivation in Láhaul depends seem to have been always constructed and kept in repair entirely by the landholders of the villages which use them. They are considered therefore to be the property of the shareholders in the water, who cast lots every year to decide the rotation in which each man shall irrigate his fields. Each holding furnishes a man for repairs; fines are levied on absentees, and consumed in a common feast with the produce of the *yurzing* or canal field, if there is one. The

* By each *jeola*, excepting those held by two families of *dojom*, or kinsmen of the Thákur.

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Begár or forced labour demandable from landholders in Láhaul.

general opinion is that no outsider can get a share of the water of a canal, except from the body of old shareholders. The State in a *Khálsa kothí*, or the Thákur in a *jágír kothí* could not give a share; practically, therefore, their power of approvement of the waste is limited unless a new canal can be made.

Mr. Barnes describes the system of forced labour or *begár* prevailing everywhere in the hills, and mentions that it is one of the conditions of the tenure by which all proprietors hold land of the State in the hills. The forced labour which falls upon the Láhaulís is peculiarly heavy, as their country is a highway used by many travellers and officials on tour, and is surrounded by high snowy mountains and large tracts of elevated waste. The demand all occurs within the six months of summer, the time within which all field-work and all trading journeys have to be done. It is distributed equally on each *jeola* or holding, but at times it may be ruinous to certain families to have to give perhaps their only man; or there may be none at home, all being away engaged in the carrying trade between Tibet and Kúlu, in which almost all Láhauli landholders are concerned. The arrangements which have grown up owing to these difficulties, and which have now become fixed institutions, deserve to be briefly described. For the periodical repairs of roads a man is demanded from every house; for the carriage of travellers' baggage a man is taken from every *jeola*, or full allotment of land only, and the demand for supplies of all kinds required for travellers is distributed in the same way. Each *kothá* or group of *kothís* repairs certain lengths of highway, and carries baggage, and furnishes supplies for the stage nearest to it to travellers merely moving about the valley. The four *kothís* of Rangloi unite to undertake the carriage from Láhaul over the Rhotang Pass into Kúlu. There remains the most difficult task of all, that is, the providing supplies and carriage to travellers wishing to leave Láhaul for Ladákh, Spiti, Zánskár or Chamba by the Bará Lachá, Shinkúl or Kukti Passes, which are all over 16,000 feet in height, and involve a camping out for several nights in the wastes. For the work of these passes the ten *kothís* of Gára and Pattan have put themselves on a common roll or roster. Each *kothí* keeps an account with the other *kothís* of its contributions, and within each *kothí* each holding keeps an account with the other holdings. If a holding cannot furnish its man in its turn, a substitute is sent, and there are fixed sums which the defaulting holding is obliged to pay to the substitute (in addition to the pay which he gets from the travellers), as follows:—

Name of route.	Sum payable to the substitute.
To Rupshú, over the Bára Lácha	Three rupees cash, 70lbs barley meal, 1 pair boots, butter 2lbs.
To Spiti, over the Bára Lácha ...	Rupees 2 cash, 36lbs barley meal, 1 pair boots, butter 2lbs.
To Zánskár, over the Shinkúl ...	Rupees 2 cash, 32lbs barley meal, 1 pair boots, 2lbs butter.
To Chambá, over the Kukti ...	Rupees 2 cash, 32lbs barley meal, 3 pairs plaited straw sandals.

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has for long past been all used up, and the present holdings are therefore all of old standing. There are no Thákurs, in Spiti. The Gialpo or sovereign of Ladákh was the lord from whom in theory all held. The general rights of the State and the landholders in both waste and arable lands are the same as in the *Khálsa kothís* of Láhaul. There are 296 *jeolas* in Spiti, with an average area of about 5 acres. There are no *dang piri* or irrigated grass fields, as in Láhaul. All the men of the village graze and cut grass in common. A kind of thistle and wild gram or chick-pea are cut and stored for winter use.

425 Right of sale and mortgage.

No instance can be quoted of a landholder having sold the whole or a large part of his holding; but the custom of selling small portions is said to be ancient. The general idea seems to be that no one could question the validity of the sale of a whole holding, except the son or next heir. Two kinds of mortgage are in vogue. By one the land is made over to the mortgagee in lieu of interest till payment of the principal; in the other it is made over for a fixed term, on the calculation that the debt to the mortgagee will be liquidated in full within that time by the produce. The mortgagee ploughs, sows, and reaps, but the mortgagor manages the irrigation, and gets the straw for his trouble. Such a thing as an absolute gift of land appears to be unknown, and the general opinion seems to be that no man can give away land to the prejudice of his children, or that if he did do so, the gift ought to be treated as invalid unless they had grievously misbehaved. It seems the general opinion that in future a man ought to be allowed to give away his estate in the absence of any children or brothers or near kinsmen. Formerly the State would have interfered and put forward a claim. It is even now allowed that, in default of heirs or gift, the estate would lapse to the State; but our Government has hitherto not looked after its rights in this respect, and one or two instances have occurred of such estates being appropriated in late years by the landholders of the village and granted by them to some new man for a sum of money down, which they divided among themselves.

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423 592 Distribution of fields comprised in an ordinary holding or household allotment in Spiti.

The great mass of the arable land consists of the holdings of the *talfás* or revenue-payers, which are each separate estates of the nature of household allotments. Within these estates the following occupants may be found:—Firstly, in each there is the *káng chimpá* (great house) or head of the family, who is primarily responsible for the revenue, the *begár* or forced labour, and the share of common expenses demandable on the whole holding. He is the eldest son, for primogeniture prevails, but it does not follow that his father must be dead, for by custom of the country the father retires from the headship of the family when his eldest son is of full age and has taken unto himself a wife. There are cases in which father and son agree to live on together in one house, but they are very rare. On each estate there is a kind of dower house with a plot of land attached, to which the father in these cases retires. When installed there, he is called the *káng chungpá* (small houseman). The amount of land attached differs on different estates; where it is big, the *káng chungpá* pays a sum of cash, or cash and

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Distribution of fields comprised in an ordinary holding or household allotment in Spiti.

grain, about equal to its rateable assessment; but where it is small, as is usually the case, he pays a small cash fee only, which is really rather a hearth-tax than a share of the land-revenue, to which, however, it is credited in collection. The *káng chungpá* is not liable for any share of common expenses (a heavy charge in Spiti,) nor for performance of *begár* or forced labour. On occasions of a great demand for men to do some work near the village he may be impressed, but the principle is that he is free. Sometimes, in the absence of a living father, the widowed mother, or the grand-father, or an uncle, aunt, or unmarried sister, occupies the small house and land on the same terms. A *yáng chungpá* is the term used to describe a person living on an estate in a separate house of lower degree than that of the *káng chungpá*. Such a person is always some relation of the head of the family; he may be the grand-father who has been pushed out of the small house by the retirement of his own son, the father, but it is commoner to find unmarried sisters, aunts, or their illegitimate offspring in this position.*

A small plot of land is generally attached to the house, and a few annas of revenue paid, but rather as a hearth-tax on account of grass, wood, water, &c., than as the share of the land-tax on the plot held. In proof of this some *yáng chungpás* have no land attached to the house, but pay like the others. Most of these people would be entitled to some maintenance from the head of the family if he did not give them a plot of land. They are not liable to be impressed for ordinary *begár*, but must help on occasions of great demand near home. They often do distant *begár*, however, in place of the head of the family by mutual agreement. On many holdings another class of people are found living in a dependent position towards the *káng chimpá* or head of the family. They have a small house to themselves, with or without a patch of land attached; generally they pay an anna or two to revenue, whether they hold land or not. In fact in this respect, and with regard to liability to *begár*, they are much on the same footing as the *yáng chungpá*; the fundamental difference is that they are not related to the head of the family, and have got their house or house and land, not with reference to any claim to maintenance, but out of favour, or for the mutual benefit of both parties. They are, therefore, expected to do a great deal of field work for him. People of this class are called *dotul*, literally smoke-makers, because they have a hearth to themselves, but no other interest in the land. To mark the fact that they hold of one particular landholder, the word *rángi*, meaning private or particular, is added. All the land held by the *káng chungpá* and by *yáng chungpás* and *rángi dotuls*, pertains to the holding or allotment, cannot be alienated, and lapses to the *káng chimpá*. The latter could not of course evict a *káng chungpá*, and the general feeling is that when he has once given a plot to a *yáng chungpá*, he could not resume it, except with consent; but he could resume from a *rángi*

* In Pín *kothi* the *kesus* families, who are the descendants of monks of an order in which marriage is permissible, commonly hold a house and small plot from the family from which they sprang, and are in the position of *yáng chungpás*.

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dotul, and would be considered quite justified in so doing on the grounds of customary service not having been properly performed.* The rules of inheritance in *dotul* holdings have been described in Section B of this Chapter (page 96.)

In most holdings also a plot of from one to half a *khal* will be found in the occupation of the *lámá* brother or uncle of the head of the family. It is ploughed and sown by the latter, but the *lámá* provides the seed and gets the whole produce. There are *lámás* in almost every family, as all younger sons of the landholders are forced by custom to enter the monasteries. This maintenance land of a *lámá* is called *táo* or *tázing*, and reverts of course to the head of the family on the death of the *lámá*.

Holdings or allotments other than those of the *talfá* or revenue-paying landholders (Spiti).

There are some fields at Dankar attached to the old fort there, which are like it the property of Government. The *Nono*, in virtue of his office, provides for the cultivation of the fields, and takes the produce. He is bound in return to keep the fort in repair. The *Nono* also holds other lands equal to several ordinary holdings in extent, which are his ancestral property; they are rent-free, and are mostly situated at Kuiling, where he resides. The Pín *Nono* also has rent-free land, but not more than equal to an ordinary holding in extent. At a place called Táshigong, a family of hereditary astrologers (*choba*) hold two allotments granted to them by the kings of Ladákh free of demand for revenue or *begár*.† Four families of blacksmiths also hold a rather small allotment apiece, and pay only a hearth-tax, not full revenue. The above are all independent estates of the same grade as those of the revenue-paying landholders, and inherited in the same way by the eldest son.

Fields excluded from the regular household allotment.

There are two families who, in addition to their revenue-paying allotments, also hold good-sized plots rent-free under the name of *manzing*; they are *umchie* or hereditary practisers of the art of medicine, and this land was granted to them in support of the art. The general opinion is that if they abandon the art, the *manzing* or physician's field could be taken from them and transferred to another. Many of the landholders practise medicine, but only these two families hold *manzing*. Certain fields are the full property of the monasteries: they pay no revenue, and are generally either near the monastery to which they belong, or in adjacent villages. The lands of the Dankar monastery is cultivated by six tenants, landholders in Dankar, who pay half produce as rent; that of the Pín monastery is cultivated gratuitously by the *Nono* of Pín; the men of Chuzí *kothí*, as the special clients of the monks, cultivate the lands of the other monasteries, but the monks are expected to give the men who actually do the work something for their trouble. In many villages there are one or two fields known as *Lhaziug* or God-

* He could resume the plot of land, but apparently he could not always evict from the house, as that has sometimes been built by the *dotul* himself.

† The phraseology of the deed of grant is curious. It is drawn up and attested by officials with high sounding titles, singed and sealed at 'our palace,' &c., and promises that the grant shall endure till the feathers of the raven turn white and the snow on the mountains black.

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land attached to the village *Lhakang* or temple. They should be considered to be the common property of the village. One of the landholders or other residents cultivates them, and pays a fixed rent which is applied to lighting the temple with lamps, or to the expenses of occasional feasts. Such a tenant can be evicted by a vote of community; sometimes all the landholders unite to cultivate these fields, and the whole produce goes to the temple expenses. Some of these temples are served by a *lámá* nominated by the *zamíndárs*, others by the *zamíndárs* themselves. In many villages there are fields known as *yurzing*, or canal land, the produce of which, as in Láhaul, is devoted to a feast at the time of annual canal repairs; these also should be considered the common property of the community. In all villages there are some persons known as *yulfa*, that is, village *dotuls*, who own a house and small field attached which they have reclaimed from the waste with the consent of the village community; some few have no field; but all pay a small fee towards the revenue of the village by way of hearth-tax. They could not be evicted, as the land was given them to induce them to settle permanently in the village, and on that understanding they have built their house and broken up the waste.

Fields excluded from regular household allotment.

The custom with regard to *begár* is much the same as in Láhaul. Ordinary repairs of roads from village to village have been hitherto performed by the *tulfa káng-chimpas*, or regular landholders only; the *káng-chungpás*, *yáng chungpás*, and *dotuls*, have only been called upon to assist on occasion of extraordinary repairs. Mr. Lyall recommended, however, that in future each house, and not each holding, should furnish a man for repairs of roads, as is now the practice in Láhaul. For the duty of carrying letters or travellers' baggage across the passes the regular landholders alone are liable, and a roster or roll of turn of duty is kept up as in Láhaul. A landholder often gets a *dotul* or other dependant to go in his stead, but the latter is at perfect liberty to refuse, and will not go unless handsomely paid.* So, again, the landholders are primarily liable for all carriage of loads from village to village; but when the number of loads is very great, all classes are impressed. In order to have a store in hand from which to meet the demands of travellers for supplies, about a *lákh* of grain is collected from each regular landholders at the commencement of the season; any extra expenses on this or any other common account are met by a rate levied on all regular holdings in Spiti. The rate is uniform, and does not vary with the rates of revenue for different villages. At the end of the season, when all the passes have closed, a meeting is held at Dankar, called the *Talrichemno*, or great tax audit, at which the accounts of collections,

Begár or forced labour in Spiti.

* As an instance of the price paid to a substitute may be given that fixed for the journey from Kibbar, in Spiti, over the Párangla pass, to Rápshu in Ladákh, viz., three rupees cash, two *khal* or about 50lbs barley meal, a large pot of butter, five or six ounces of tea, a pair of boots, the loan of sheep to carry the porter's clothes, food, &c.

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Chapter IV, B. Live-Stock.

Dhár or sheep-runs of Gaddí and Kolí shepherds in Láhaul.

The Láhaulís keep only a few sheep and goats, as the snow lies too long and too deep in the winter for the flocks to live out of doors as they do in Ladákh. For a very long time, therefore, the upper ends of the main valleys, which are uninhabited, and the grounds high above the villages in the inhabited parts, have been utilized by the Gaddí shepherds of Kángra and Chamba, and the Kolí shepherds of Kúlu. The snow begins to disappear in these places about the beginning of June; the shepherds do not ordinarily enter Láhaul before the end of that month, and they leave it again early in September, by which time the frost is beginning to be biting, and the rainy season in the outer Himalayan country has come to an end. In the fine dry climate in Láhaul the sheep escape the foot rot and other diseases which constantly attack flocks kept during the rains on the southern slopes of the outer Himalayas. The sheep arrive wretchedly thin, but by the time they are ready to leave, are in splendid condition. A short fine grass of a dull bluish-green colour, called *niru*, is their favourite food; *mat* and *morár* are names of other good kinds of grasses. The goats depend very much on the leaves and twigs of the birch and bush willow. The Gaddí shepherds are much more careful and energetic shepherds than the Kolís; they may be seen herding their goats on the face of tremendous precipices; with one woollen coat and a blanket they sleep out exposed to an icy wind, and take no harm; sometimes, however, the cold drives them to creep into the huddled-up flocks and pass the night with two or three sheep on top of them for a coverlid. Their sheep are reputed strong and hardy above those of any other shepherds. People as far away as the Bhotia traders of Kumáon, buy a great many every year at high prices as beasts of burden for the trade over the great snowy range between Kumáon and Tibet. These grazing grounds or sheep-runs of foreign shepherds in Láhaul are called *dhárs* or *bans* or *nigáhrs*. A *dhár* or *ban* is often sub-divided into several *vand*, each *vand* containing enough ground to graze one full flock or *khandáh* of sheep and goats. Each *dhár* has its more or less precisely fixed boundaries, and the *wariśi* or title to it, is understood to have originated in a grant from a Rája of Kúlu, or a Thákur of Láhaul. Among the Gaddís some transfers by gift or sale appear to have taken place, and in several cases the original family which obtained the grant has long ceased to use the *dhár*; but in recognition of its old title the shepherd now in possession has to halt a day on the journey back and let his sheep manure the fields of the original owner, with whose permission his occupation commenced. Whether the original owner could now turn out an old occupant of this kind is a doubtful question. The grey-beards seem to think that he could send up any number of his own sheep, but could not put in a third person to the detriment of the old occupant. The title of the Kolí shepherds to their *dhárs* is the same as that by which they hold their *nigáhrs* in Kúlu. In some few instances a *dhár* was granted to a *wazír*, or person of influence, as a personal favour; but, as a general rule, they seem to have been given to the men of certain hamlets or *páttis* collectively, though perhaps the *patta* or deed of grant contained only one man's name. There are many fine runs in the uninhabited part of the Chandra valley above *purána* Koksar, which,

101 175 631 inent people say that if the Kashmir dispute were resolved in Pakistan's favor Ladakh would forsake India and rejoin Tibet. Ladakh has long been called Little Tibet; but it never was, strictly speaking, a Tibetan province. Commercially it had ties with Yarkand and Kashmir. Religiously it had ties to the Dalai Lama, to whom Ladakh sent an annual tribute. And thus it was politically allied to Tibet. But it was, in fact, an independent principality under a mild despotism.

175 645 It was ruled by a king who did little but collect revenues and sit in contemplation as a Buddhist prince. The Prime Minister was the administrative officer. His position was almost hereditary, staying in one family for years. Ladakh had a nobility made up of petty chiefs, each of whom had dominion over a valley or region. There were eight of these, one of them being Gya, where we stayed.

792 425 556 The early kings and nobles were patrons of the lamas and gave them grants of land. That was the beginning of the wealth of the monasteries. Wealth begat wealth; the rich became richer. Revenues were used to acquire new farming lands. Pious men presented monasteries with lands. Farmers who had no sons left their wealth to the church when they died. The economic power of the monasteries grew and grew.

792 175 668 631 This hold of the monasteries on Ladakh goes back to a political maneuver by the secular power. About the seventh century the kings of Ladakh and Tibet used Lamaism to circumvent the feudal powers of local nobles. This region was a large collection of separate political oases ruled over by local families. The early kings used the church to tie all these communities together. The church, in other words, became the unifying power, growing larger and larger and becoming a continuous force until eventually it superseded not only the local nobles but the secular kings themselves. No secular power arose to displace the church for several reasons. The communities were widely dispersed; the communication between them was difficult; there were no large, local units

[Ladakh -- Analyst]

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

426 456 671 loans. But ancient habits are hard to break. I do not know the extent to which these new Kashmir laws are observed. There are ugly stories about current usurious practices. About 95 per cent of the agricultural loans in Ladakh are repayable in kind. Monasteries advance food in the winter to tenants. Barley advanced when the grain is sixty cents must be repaid when the grain is thirty cents. Isn't repayment of twice the amount of the loan a kind of usury?

423 671 425 Kashmir has gone far in breaking up its feudal system based on landownership. Under its new law every landowner is entitled to keep 182 *kanals* of land. The government has taken the rest of each owner's holdings and distributed it to the tenants. In the vicinity of Leh over twenty thousand acres have passed from twenty-four landlords to the peasants. The distribution at Leh, as at other places in Ladakh, was free, the peasants not paying for the land. Nor, to date, has the government paid the owners any compensation. Whether or not they should pay is a political question that agitates Kashmir.

423 Payment of just compensation, in the American sense, is impossible. The holdings were so large and so vast that it would take all the wealth of the state to compensate the old owners by our constitutional standards. Nehru and I discussed the problem in Delhi in August 1951.

"If the former owners get paid the full value of their land they will still own the wealth of the nation," Nehru said. And they would. New people would own the land. But the bulk of the revenues would still flow to the old owners.

Various ideas are being discussed for compensating the owners: payment that avoids confiscation; an annuity to the owner for his life and a lesser annuity to his children for their lives. What Kashmir will eventually do has not been decided. But in two important respects Kashmir has not touched the land problem.

It has not distributed the landholdings of the King of Ladakh, who completely owns the village of Stok not far from Leh. It has

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

425 not distributed the landholdings of the monasteries. Though some twenty thousand acres were taken from twenty-four landlords in the vicinity of Leh, as I have said, nine thousand acres, belonging to the monasteries, were left untouched.

671/ The truth is that the Kashmir law excepts these holdings from
423 its operation. In the case of the King of Ladakh, the exception is
792 not important, for his holdings are not great. He probably was
425 excluded because the monasteries all around his estate were excluded. The monasteries were excluded because the power of the lamas is so great that the government did not deem it expedient to disturb the status quo.

I heard various versions of that decision. One official in Leh said to me, "If a monastery has five hundred lamas, in fairness each lama would be entitled to 182 *kanals* on a redistribution of the land. That would at times result in an increase in the holdings of the monastery."

Another official had a different view: "If the lands are taken from the monasteries, who will support them?" he asked. He went on to explain that, while the monasteries collect some funds from the people, these funds are inadequate for the support of the lamas. The people are poor and can give very little. What they do give are small sums on festival days, on marriages, and the like. There is no sustaining congregation as we know it. The monasteries are utterly dependent on the land for their support.

This official added, "If the lands are taken from the monasteries, then the government must support the monasteries. That would be bad."

"Because church and state should be separate?" I asked.

"No. Because the government could not afford to maintain the monasteries."

792 The bald truth is that the lamas are a powerful political force. The position of the lamas is strong. If A were running against B for public office and the lamas sent word down that B was hostile to the church, there is no doubt A would be elected.

19: Asboe M-3 (no date)1937 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4
Lahul

221 TERN TIBET. *By Walter Asboe.*
241 in Western Tibet, in the order in which they occur from April until December are :—

1. Wall building and repairing breaches.
2. Cutting new watercourses, and repairs to old ones.
3. Planting of willow saplings.
4. Collecting of thorns for hedging fields.
5. Carrying out and spreading manure on fields.
6. Sowing and ploughing.
7. The ceremony of blessing the fields.
8. Beating straw for straw shoes : this done by the women.
9. Mud washing and general spring-cleaning of the houses.
10. Watering grass land.
11. Weeding with small hoe (*surmo*).
12. Irrigating the fields.
13. Beating straw for straw shoes (this, during a slack time).
14. Cutting the grass and storing it on house roofs.
15. Reaping the grain fields.
16. Building corn stacks.
17. Threshing.
18. Winnowing.
19. Carrying out and spreading manure on fields.
20. Collecting wood for the winter fuel.
21. Milling grain for the winter supply.

221 From December until spring farming pursuits
286 cease, owing to the heavy snowfall, and the population engages in village social functions, spinning and weaving of yarn for clothes.

656 Lahoul being under British administration, the
425 acquirement and disposal of land are regulated in accordance with Government rules. Similarly in Ladakh, another district of Western Tibet, the people are subject to the revenue regulations of the native State of Kashmir.

241 Although in certain parts of Western Tibet the
787 people do not engage in any agricultural enterprise

19: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1937 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4 Lahul

241 787 before a verdict as to the propitious moment for beginning such occupations is given by the hierarchy, this custom is considerably relaxed in Lahoul, where the community does not pay so much attention to the priestly oracle as do the people living in the more remote valleys of Western Tibet.

Landmarks.

423 685 691 Rocks, stones and watercourses serve as landmarks to distinguish between the various farm holdings. When disputes occur, arising out of the removing of rock or stone landmarks, a subordinate in the Government survey department is called in to remeasure the land which is under dispute, and legal proceedings are taken by the offended party.

Virgin Soil.

425 [273] When a farmer contemplates cultivating virgin soil, he has first of all to consult the wishes of the community, lest he should infringe the rights of communal pasturage, before negotiating with the Government authorities under whose administration he lives. If the community is agreed that there is no encroachment on the pasturage, a beer drinking party for all concerned is arranged at the expense of the farmer, who may then proceed to acquire the prospective piece of waste land from the Government.

Regulation of Water Supply.

312 624 An adequate supply of water from rivers, glaciers and accumulations of snow is essential in a practically rainless country such as Western Tibet is. Hence the community is most jealous in protecting its rights over such water supply. Two men (Las-pa) are chosen in rotation yearly by the villagers to supervise the communal water supply.

Their duties consist of (1) calling the villagers when the watercourse has to be repaired, (2) collecting beer from each household for the nourishment of about 14 people engaged in the repairs.

In Ladakh the watchers of the water supply are called 'Choo-spon' (lit. Master of the water supply). In cases where there is a communal reservoir for collecting water for the fields, the 'Choo-spons' (usually two or three men) allot the amount of water for each farmstead, and so prevent the possibility of one farmer stealing more water than is his rightful share.

241 312

Arrangement of Fields.

Owing to the mountainous nature of the

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could have married, and the parties are declared wed. This is the binding ritual which makes them husbands and wife. Unless it has been performed, the wife is not allowed into any private house or monastery in Ladak, just as unmarried girls are not permitted to worship at shrines, except at those of families in the houses.

A feast lasting three days is the next item on the programme. On the first day, the local villagers are fed, on the second the relatives and friends, and on the third the helpers and members of the bridegroom's *p'ha-spun*. Dancing round the *Drangyas* and the *Sha-kog* still standing in the yard, takes place on each of these days, and on the last one, it is broken up and distributed to the family and relatives, who accept the pieces as holy and of good omen. The Sha-kog, particularly, is taken to the bride's home, where it is sliced into pieces and given to her family to eat, the last morsel being given to her. Then the witnesses are paid off, each of them, in 1938, getting one rupee, and their helpers half that amount, while the lamas, who took part in the ceremony, receive a square piece of cloth each and some cash.

In the case of a *mag-pa* marriage, the same order of procedure is followed, except that the roles are reversed, so to speak, the man taking the part of the woman, and the woman that of the bridegroom. It is the *mag-pa* who is conducted in ceremony to the bride's house, and not the other way round. When signing the contract of marriage, it is the girl's parents who endorse the pledge that her future husband will enjoy the property which is hers with him.

3. *Division of property between parents and children*

When the eldest child of a Buddhist family in Ladak marries, the time has come for his or her parents to leave their home, to give up the house and the property belonging to it to their son of daughter, who has the right to enter immediately into possession of the greater part of his or her inheritance.

A small portion, sufficient for the support of the several fathers, the mother and unmarried younger sisters that there may be, is made over to them while the remaining, larger portion, is at once acquired by the eldest son or daughter as his or her exclusive property.

This custom, which forces parents of grown-up, married children to retire from active life and from the responsibilities of their household when they are still not much beyond middle age, is called *K'hang chen K'hang gu cho ches* (*K'hang ch'hen K'hang bu Pyo Ches*), or translated literally, "Big house, small house to make".

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The parents and the unmarried sisters go to live in the *k'hang-gu* or small house (which may be either a small part of the large house, or a separate one on the family land, or even lodgings in some one else's house if a *k'hang-gu* cannot be afforded by the family), while the eldest son or daughter takes over the major portion of the household which is called the *K'hang-chen*.

The reason for doing things in this way is, I was told by Joseph Gergan on the 6th October 1938, that bride and mother-in-law unless separated, are sure to quarrel. A Tibetan proverb says:

P'ha gNyen-bo sGo rGyap-la
Ma gNyen-bo Gog sBugs-la

which means:

"The father's relations are behind the door
The mother's relations are right inside the hearth."

Or, in other words, that the relations of the husband(s) should be turned out, while the wife's relations can always be sure of a warm welcome in in the home – that is in a *bag-ma* household; in a *mag-pa* one this naturally does not apply.

Reasons for the existence of this special custom, valid for both *bag-ma* and *mag-pa* marriage, have been given as the fact that the parents are getting old (after fifty, Ladakis, like Tibetans, age very quickly), and that, for this reason, they can no longer assume responsibility for the cultivation of the land, nor continue to bear the burden of the recurring festivals, etc. So they go into the *k'hang-gu* where they have no obligations any more, and leave their newly wedded children to shoulder the charges which go with possession of the *k'hang-chen*.

The *k'hang-gu* consists of a smaller house, standing generally on the land of the *k'hang-chen*, and of the fields called *To-zhing* (*lTo-zhing*), "food-field", necessary for the maintenance of the persons who live in it. No charges or dues are collected from the *k'hang-gu* by the Kashmir State, and those who live in it do so absolutely freely. The portion of the father or fathers is called *p'ha-skal* (*P'ha-skal*), and that of the mother *ma-skal* (*Ma-skal*), for such division between parents is observed. Unmarried sisters live on the *p'ha-skal*.

The fields of the *k'hang-gu* can be cultivated by the inhabitants of the *k'hang-chen*; this saves trouble for the old folk. But if no such labour is forthcoming, then the *ma-skal* will be cultivated by the relatives of the mother, while the fathers and the unmarried sisters will look after the *p'ha'skal*.

Apart from land to be tilled, there are some animals in the *k'hang-gu*

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595 425 428 688 such as cattle, sheep and goats in small quantities. Its dwellers also have household utensils and movable property such as furniture. These things, the size of the house, and the amount of fields and animals, vary from household to household, but are fixed quantities within each one individually; they do not change but remain the same for every succeeding generation.

595 425 428 [851] The elder son or daughter who has acquired ownership of the *k'hang-chen* takes over full proprietorship, which includes not only the rights that go with it, but also the obligations. Thus, an elder son has to look after his younger brothers, maintain them whatever their behaviour, be it good or bad (he may never disinherit them), share his wife with them and look upon the children born to him as just as much theirs as his own. Younger brothers are at liberty to leave and contract marriages elsewhere if they so wish; in actual fact, they often do become *mag-pas* of heiresses, in which case they forfeit their rights to property in the [992] *k'hang-chen* of their elder brother. Sometimes, they become lamas and join some monastery, in which case they are entitled to retain their share or give it up, as they please.

595 196 The owner of the *k'hang-chen* must see to it that the monthly *lha-bsang* (*lHa-bSang* (*aBras*)) or "god meal (of rice)" ceremony is performed. This takes place on the 10th of each month – and sometimes on the 8th too. Occasionally, a neighbour will help by holding the rite in his house for both households, and vice-versa. The New Year Tibetan festival must also be observed, as well as those agricultural feasts which occur at sowing time in February and March (*sa-kag*, *ma-zhing*) and at the harvest in October (*sGrub-lha*).

595 651 An obligation exists also to white-wash *chötens* and *mani*-walls regularly, and for some, to do the same to the walls of the castle at Leh. Death rites must be carried out, tax paid to the Kashmir government (which holds only the owner of the *k'hang-chen* responsible for this) as well as various dues and *ulag* or *begar* (forced, unpaid labour) acquitted to those to whom it is owed (government, monasteries). Divorced sisters who return home must be looked after (they have the right to live in the *k'hang-chen* and do not go to the *k'hang-gu*), and younger sons who go to Lhasa for studies and employment must have their expenses paid by the head of the family.

595 591 888 My informant, Nono Tse P'hün, told me that he had seen households in which not only the parents lived in a *k'hang-gu*, but also grandparents and even great-grandparents. In Likir, there was in 1953 a great-grandfather who had outlived everyone in the various *k'hang-gus* on

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called *Shrub-zhing* (*sGrub-zhing?*), that is a small field put aside to supply her with some modest means of subsistance. 595 768 [936]

The widow of a deceased eldest brother is otherwise at liberty to leave the house and family. But her choice must be made at once, at the death of her eldest husband; should she not avail herself of this opportunity, she remains the legal wife of the surviving brothers and she will lose her claim to separation, unless she formally divorces them later.

If a family of brothers, married in *bag-ma*, dies without issue, their unmarried eldest sister is entitled to the inheritance, if she continues to live on the family property. If she is married in *bag-ma* elsewhere, she can occasionally divorce in order to inherit the property. Otherwise, the next-of-kin who become the heirs are the father, the mother, the widow of the deceased (if she continues to reside in the family house), the eldest of agnates, the *p'ha-spun*, in that order of precedence. 428 [586]

Unless a widow inherits the property, she is only entitled to maintenance during her lifetime. She will receive *To-zhing* if she is an only or the eldest wife; if she is a second or other subsequent wife, she will only receive *Shrub-zhing*. If, on the other hand, a widow inherits the property, she is entitled like an eldest daughter, to take a *mag-pa*; she must, however, hand on the ancestral property complete at her death, to the heirs which she may have with her new husband, or to the next-of-kin of her late husband who are entitled to receive the succession. [936] 595 428

If an eldest daughter, who has inherited the family property, dies without issue, her *mag-pa* is entitled to succeed to it, provided that he marries a relative of his deceased wife's family. If he, again, has no children, after his death his second wife will inherit the property if she survives him. If she does not, the relatives of his first wife will be the heirs. An heiress may make a gift of property to her *mag-pa* during her lifetime, to make sure of his possession in case of her death. Such a gift is perfectly legal, and often takes place.

Self-acquired property, as opposed to ancestral property, can always be made the object of a gift by a proprietor. He can also leave it by will to other heirs than his legal ones, despite the fact that he is not entitled to do this with family property. In some parts of Ladak (Tangtse), if a son is suffering from some incurable physical defect, a father is entitled to skip him and to arrange beforehand for some other heir to take his place. 428 [925] [932]

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595 425 428 [182]

He asked me how it was that we were so wealthy in Europe without being polyandrous. It seemed to him incomprehensible that one could stay rich while dividing up the family property with each monogamous marriage, as we do in our countries. It would be impossible to do this in Ladak, he said, because there would never be enough to go round, and everybody would quickly be reduced to famine.

I must say that Lobsang Tok-Tok's question took me by surprise. In those days I had given no thought to this problem and it had never occurred to me yet that this might appear extraordinary to people living in polyandry. So I said that, now that I came to think of it, it was no doubt true that things were not the same with us. When we married, I said, each of us goes off with his wife and tries to fend for himself and build up a family life based on his own earnings. Of course, it meant tapping new sources of production, but then we did move away and were continually starting new enterprises in new places in order to be able to live.

595 425 428 795 [AA]

Lobsang agreed that it would not be possible to do otherwise if one did not live in polyandry on the same piece of land, in the same household, generation after generation, without dividing it up. He had noticed, he said, that those Ladakis who were converts to Mohammedanism did the same as we did; they ceased, overnight, to be polyandrous, and divided up the property immediately they got married. The result was that there was not enough to go round for all of them. The eldest brother remained on the best part of the land, and the others had to move away. They had to look for work, often as landless labourers, which was most depressing. He had noticed, too, that some of them even went further afield, and travelled all the way to Burma to work in the ruby mines there. Obviously, he concluded, they did so just as Europeans had to do, because they were monogamous, and even, in some cases, polygamous (polygynous).

595 123 182

Lobsang Tok-Tok was silent for a little while after this long discourse (which Nono Tse-P'hün translated for me) and I sat cross-legged opposite him, a cup of tea in my hand, looking at his heavy, mongoloid frame and face (upon which some hair did, nevertheless, grow), and wondering who was doing the field-work, he or I. Then he said something again to my interpreter and shortly afterwards I heard in English what it was that he had said. It was that he could now grasp why Europeans had colonies throughout the world, why they came to India and even to Ladak. It was obviously because, with the family system that they had, they did not have enough to live on at home, and the fact that they did not practise polyandry led them to go overseas to seek

[TEXT continues on P. 364]

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595 123 182 a livelihood – like the Moslem Ladakis who went to Burma. I was, I confess, considerably impressed by the old man's perspicacity. It was also a lesson to me, and showed me better than anything else what circumstances were like in this area of Tibetan culture, and how polyandry was connected, or appeared to be, with the economic necessities of the environment.

595 601 That same afternoon, we went on to visit another polyandrous family living in a neighbouring house. Here, an elderly father, remarried to a new wife after his first wife had died, lived in a *k'hang-gu* situated on the family grounds, very close to the ancestral house, the *k'hang-chen*. In the latter, his son by the deceased wife, now lived with his wife and [115] five of six children that the couple had had. This son was our informant, and apart from the polyandry in which the sons lived, I was [888] interested to see how grandparents and parents resided separately. Their [591] genealogy is to be found in Table 28.

591 595 888 Lobsang Namgyal's eldest daughter was married off in *bag-ma* to the eldest son of the Tsana household. His three sons were still very young (the eldest only just eighteen) but were already married polyandrously to Skalzang Deskid. She had no children yet, and I was told that they were waiting for her to have her first baby to put Lobsang Namgyal and his wife, Tsering Rolma, into a second *k'hang-gu*. This is sometimes done in Ladak, instead of taking over from the parents directly [425] [428] after the wedding; it is as if the newly-married had no reason yet to [585] become the official owners of the family property. The two younger daughters, still very small, would move into the new *k'hang-gu* with their parents, I was told, and would remain there until they were married out in *bag-ma*. Asked where the "small house" was into which father and mother would eventually move, I was informed that they would take the place of Tsang Dön-drup and his wife, Tsang Rolma. These two would then go to another *k'hang-gu* situated on another piece of ancestral land, and in which grandparents always resided in the Tsang-bi family. It was quite apparent that the different portions reserved for retiring elders were always the same, awaiting new occupants which the inexorable march of time brought to them.

595 601 888 591 On the following day, August 31st 1938, Nono Tse-P'hün took me to more polyandrous households of Leh. First, we visited a family called *Od-ldan* (*aOd-lDan*) in which an heiress had married in *mag-pa*, and lived in the *k'hang-gu* while her three boys, living in polyandry, occupied the *k'hang-chen*. Their genealogy as I made it that day, is given in Table 29.

*[i.e., Lobsang Namgyal -- Analyst]